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ABSTRACT

If portfolios are to be used to assess students' progress, it is essential for preservice teachers to have the opportunity to become familiar with the use of this technique prior to beginning their teaching career. At Eastern College, Pennsylvania, portfolio assessment is first introduced in the Developmental Reading course and further refined in the Reading Disabilities course. Preservice teachers keep a portfolio containing their efforts for the semester and collect a portfolio of materials collaboratively with the youngsters they tutor. Teachers in training are coached in preparing a personal portfolio containing their projects, their comments regarding the process, and conference notes taken from meetings with the professor to discuss contents. Compiling portfolios offers the student and the professor the chance to see the progress made during the semester; acts as a model for the teacher in training to use in the classroom; and enables teachers in training to have empathy for the children who will be using a portfolio collection in the classroom. A summary sheet is given to students for organizational purposes. Teachers in training tutor a child for 10 sessions (approximately one hour each) throughout the semester. Teachers in training also collaborate with a classmate when evaluating the tutee's portfolio. The program has been successful in helping preservice teachers to understand the process of portfolio collection for their students as well as themselves. (Contains a sample portfolio summary sheet and a list of suggested items for the tutee's portfolio.) (RS)

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Portfolio Assessment for Pre-service Teachers: Two hands on techniques to familiarize students in a Reading Methods Course with this form of assessment

Paper presented at the Spring Conference of the National Council of Teachers of English, March 1994 Portland, Oregon

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Portfolio Assessment for Pre-service Teachers: Two hands on techniques to familiarize students in a Reading Methods Course with this form of assessment

Marie B. Koals, Ed.D.

Portfolio assessment is being adopted in many schools throughout the country as a means of determining the progress of students at all stages of literacy learning. Portfolios may be used by the classroom teacher as a diagnostic teaching tool to inform instruction. The use of a portfolio assists the educator when designing a program to meet the needs of students.

It is essential for the portfolio to belong to the student so that he/she may be comfortable with the materials used to assess his/her abilities and begin to think strategically and metacognitively about the learning process. He/she should have a hand in determining the materials which are placed in the portfolio. Teachers are encouraged to share the contents of the portfolio with the student periodically, so that he/she may see the progress that is being made and discuss the direction in which they will move in order to develop strategies to aid the student in becoming a more efficient learner.

Assessment becomes a shared responsibility. Power is given to the learner to determine the items to be included as well as have a part in the evaluation of those articles. Goals are set in advance by the student and the teacher. These goals are then adjusted as time progresses and other needs arise. The student takes a part in assessing the materials and then setting a program to develop the needed skills and abilities. It is helpful to map out with the student the direction learning should take.

Portfolios are shared with parents, administrators and other educators who feel responsible and care about the student's educational progress and success. Portfolios aid all interested parties in detecting the educational direction in which the student is moving. Past accomplishments as well as present projects are readily available for scrutiny and comparison. Decisions do not have to be made on the basis of one standardized test, but rather on a set of carefully collected materials, along with testing, which show the students growth as well as his/her deficiencies.

At Eastern College we recognize the necessity of training in the use of portfolio assessment. If portfolios are to be used as a means of assessing students' progress in our nation's schools, it is essential for pre-service teachers to have the opportunity to become familiar with the use of this technique prior to beginning their teaching career. It is helpful if they have had the chance to learn more about portfolio assessment in their methods classes. Therefore, at Eastern College, portfolio assessment is first introduced in the Developmental Reading course and further refined in the Reading Disabilities course. We use a two pronged method for educating our students in this area. They are asked to keep a portfolio containing their efforts for the semester. They also collect a portfolio of materials, collaboratively with the youngster they are tutoring, as part of an assignment for these two courses.

For discussion in this paper, we will be referring to two types of students. For the purposes of clarity, the students taking the Reading Methods Courses will be called "teachers in training", while the children they are tutoring will be called "tutees".

Prior to discussing portfolio assessment, the professor elicits the students' feelings and prior knowledge about the process of portfolio assessment as well as other forms of evaluation. The professor then develops appropriate lectures and activities to fill in the gaps of information. At the end of the semester, the students and the professor again discuss portfolio assessment. In this way, the instructor and the students can determine the changes in feelings, knowledge, and understanding that have taken place.

According to Stahle and Mitchell (1993), student portfolios are an appropriate assessment device for all age groups, but very little information is found in the professional literature regarding its use as a tool for assessment or a modeling technique in teacher training classes. However, Ohlhausen and Ford (1990), reported that a follow-up questionnaire given to graduate students in a methods course, revealed a 19% increase of portfolio use in their own classrooms after experience in using portfolio informed instruction was demonstrated. Weisberg and Koals (1993) found that extensive training in portfolio usage with Reading Professionals in their final practicum before obtaining their Reading Specialists Certification, improved the understanding and feelings of these educators about the use of portfolios in their own classrooms according to a questionnaire to which these students responded.

At Eastern College, teachers in training, are coached in preparing a personal portfolio containing their projects, their comments regarding the process, and conference notes taken from meetings with the professor to discuss the contents. The purpose of this project is four fold:

- (1) It enables the student and the professor the chance to see the progress made during the semester, make suggestions and corrections as needed and decide which areas still need reinforcement. This portfolio does not preclude the use of tests. A mid-term is given, graded, discussed and placed in the portfolio. Students' final grades, however, include information from more than a few written tests and classroom participation. The portfolio shows the student's efforts and accomplishments throughout the semester. In conferencing with the professor, the student is given helpful hints about improving work in progress and is aided in evaluating his/her own needs.
- (2) It acts as a model so that the teacher in training will see the importance of the use of this form of assessment in the classroom.
- (3) The portfolio is the beginning of the development of a file which may be shown to a prospective employer once the student has graduated.
- (4) The teacher in training has the opportunity to have empathy for the children who will be using a portfolio collection as a form of assessment in their classes.

For the purposes of this project, the teachers in training use a brown, expandable portfolio file with five sections labeled: completed projects, projects in progress, comments during conferencing, reflective log and tutee's portfolio.. This type of a container is easily carried about without the loss of materials and can be transferred to the professor for examination.

Individual assignments are collected and marked when due but may be changed during the semester. If the teacher in training chooses to revise a project, the original document must also remain in the portfolio. If the project is substantially improved, the student's original grade will be changed.

A summary sheet is given to the student for organizational purposes. The portfolio is collected at mid-semester and a conference is held with the student. The teacher in training may request other conferences throughout the semester, as needed. At the end of the semester the teacher in training organizes the portfolio contents and forms a table of contents. Extra credit projects may also be included. Following is an example of the summary sheet:

PORTFOLIO SUMMARY SHEET

NAME:

Project	Date Due	Grade
In-class writings 1. First literacy experiences 2. Interview a friend 3. Assessment (pre) 4. Reflections on children's books 5. Reflections on comprehension 6. The writing process 7. Reflections on studying 8. Reading materials 9. The home/school connection 10. Assessment (post)	Given throughout the semester 1. Jan. 12 2. Jan. 19 3. Jan. 24 4. Jan. 31 5. Feb. 14 6. March 16 7. March 23 8. April 13 9. April 18 10. April 25	
Critique of three (3) articles Classroom Observation	Article 1 February 2 Article 2 February 23 Article 3 March 2 Present articles March 23 March 16	
Lesson Plans and Log Child's Portfolio	First 5 plans and log - Feb. 23 Last 5 plans and log - April 13 Feb. 23/April 13	
Critique of ten (10) content area trade books	Original list/topic March 2 Written critique and copies April 6 - Present books	
Student designed IRI and partner's critique	January 31	

Project	Date Due	Grade
Trade book mini unit: Strategies to be presented throughout the semester; turn in written copy on date assigned 1. KWL 2. QAR 3. DRA and DRTA 4. Story Map 5. 2 comprehension strategies of choice 6. Conceptual map 7. 2 vocabulary strategies of choice 8. 3 word identification strategies of choice 9. SQ3R 10. Critical Thinking Questions (10)	Bring trade book of choice to class February 2 PRESENT 3 STRATEGIES TO CLASS - March 23, 28 1. Feb. 9 2. Feb. 9 3. Feb. 7 4. Feb. 14 5. Feb. 16 6. Feb. 21 7. Feb. 21 8. March 14 9. March 23 10 April 13	
Mid-term Exam	February 23	
Language Experience Chart Basal Review	January 19 Group presentation April 18, 20	
Portfolio Collection Mid-term Final Extra Credit	Due March 16 April 13 You may add any special work you have accomplished for the final collection of the portfolio	
Final	To be announced	

Teachers in training tutor a child for ten sessions (approximately one hour each) throughout the semester. Prior to beginning tutoring, classroom discussions are held on how to decide the materials to be used and the reading level, planning a lesson and diagnostic teaching. The importance of assessment being a continuous, ongoing process which reflects the development of the child is discussed. Portfolio's are described, and a discussion ensues about the type of items appropriate for collection.

While many possibilities are reviewed, the teacher in training is told to use what is important to the tutee. Since the time is limited, the teacher in training is not expected to use all of the items described. We discuss the importance of deciding ahead of time how the tutee's portfolio will be assessed. It is stressed that assessment must provide on-going, collaborative reflection by both student and teacher (Valencia, 1990). Teachers in training also have the opportunity to collaborate with a classmate to discuss the collection. They have access to help from the professor whenever needed. Coaching and collaboration are essential elements of this program.

SUGGESTED POSSIBILITIES FOR THE PORTFOLIO COLLECTION OF TUTEE

ITEM	TEACHER COMMENT	STUDENT COMMENT
Anecdotal records and teacher comments		
Interest and attitude surveys		
Student/teacher conferences		
List of trade books which the child has read		
Pictures		
Testing (Any forms assessment given) Ex. IRI		
Self assessment statements		
Parental observations		
Process writing (all drafts) including work in progress		
Journal entries and response logs		
Different types of writing: poetry, letters, creative pieces, reports etc.		
Artistic projects		
Collaborative works		
Response to literature and predictions		
Tapping of reading and story telling		

The teachers in training choose a classmate with whom to collaborate when evaluating the tutee's portfolio and making instructional decisions. They are encouraged to choose one of their peers who is currently tutoring a child on the same grade level as their tutee. After they have conferenced, they meet with the professor to discuss their findings.

As part of class discussions, suggestions are given for the use of portfolio assessment in a whole class situations. Teachers in training are asked to observe several classroom teachers who are using this process currently. They bring the knowledge they have gained from their observations back to the college classroom for further discussion.

Since our students are working with only one tutee, they evaluate that child's portfolio by determining the progress the child has made over the semester, and then make suggestions for further work. They do not have the opportunity to develop rubrics; however, this form of evaluation is discussed and observed when they visit their classroom teacher.

This program has been very effective in helping our students to understand the process of portfolio collection, not only for a child whom they are teaching, but also for themselves. Paris (1991) suggests that experienced teachers, while often enthusiastic about developing their own portfolios, are many times intimidated by the prospect of portfolio collection. Most of the students at Eastern College feel comfortable with the topic of portfolio assessment and are ready to take their place in a school using this method of determining the strengths and needs of the youngsters they teach. Perhaps early training in a comfortable, relaxed environment would help all teachers who propose to use a portfolio collection as an on-going diagnostic and assessment tool.

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